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OR,
THE OPENING WAY.

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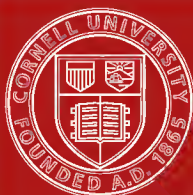


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MODERN SPIRITUALISM;

OR,

THE OPENING WAY.

BY

THOMAS B. HALL.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE first two of the articles in this small volume are reprinted, with slight alterations, from the "Unitarian Review" for November, 1879, and September, 1882. The third is now added, with more full statement of some of the points made in the first two. The three together make a second series upon Modern Spiritualism, following that published in 1863.¹ It is matter for satisfaction, to the writer at least, that the views expressed so long ago find so much confirmation in this later publication.

To minds familiar with modern things of the spirit, which are rapidly ceasing to be the strange mysteries they at first appeared, though yet only partially opened, there may seem to be little that is new in these pages. But they have been written, and are now published, for the uninitiated, as well as for those acquainted with the facts and experiences. Through all there has been no seeking after novelty, but rather and only for the truth.

¹ "Three Articles on Modern Spiritualism by a Bible Spiritualist." Crosby & Nichols. Boston, 1863.

Should some of the inquiry seem like probing into the ways of God, or too much like that feeling after the "print of the nails," which alone could persuade the doubting disciple, the writer can only say that it is in accord with the need of his own mind, as well as with the development of the day, that man should in all things find a "reason for his faith," if he can; the limit of such inquiry, though not always of his attainment, being only in his capacity to shape his questioning. Not in conceit or presumption let the asking mind raise its thought to the highest, but in that sure trust which should ever bring the sincere child to the good Father, with uplifted head and outstretched arms, for the blessings of His great love, the inspiration of His ever waiting spirit of truth.

December, 1882.

To make clearer a few passages found capable of misinterpretation, and for better adaptation to the general reader, the small volume has been revised and partially rewritten. It is again issued, with the desire that it may lead to wider recognition of the new philosophy, and help to deep personal experience of the spiritual unfolding possible to all who will earnestly and truly seek.

T. B. H.

Boston, February, 1883.

“All history shows that the first article of a saving faith, for any land or time, is faith that there is a Power in this universe strong enough to make truth-seeking safe, and good enough to make truth-telling useful.”

PRES. A. D. WHITE,
Cornell.



MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

I.

“UNTO the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness,” were the words written eighteen centuries ago, of the dispensation then opening. History repeats itself; and again the announcement of new truth, and a greater possibility in the world’s development, has proved a stumbling-block to many. To others, and these no longer an exceptional few, Modern Spiritualism has proved AN OPENING WAY,—often through struggle which has seemed like climbing the very steeps of Calvary, to be rewarded at the summit with such joyful assurance, such peaceful outlook, such knowledge, and such faith, as have well repaid all the toil and pain of the sharp ascent. Largely out of knowledge so attained and assured, these pages are written.

Walking one day of December, 1862, upon a familiar railroad causeway within the limits of Boston, our attention was drawn to a piece of granitic quartz, lying among the ten thousand other stones which formed the gravelly embankment. On picking

it up and turning it over we found that a portion of the stone had crumbled out from the under side, so as to leave two veins of white quartz, easily recognized, though roughly broken, to be in the form of the Christian cross. We accepted the emblem with joy and trembling. Such, we thought, had been our experience in the cause of modern Spiritualism. Drawn first to examine the external phenomena seemingly from motives of curiosity, we had learned, upon entering deeper into the examination, that we had found no bauble with which to amuse an idle hour, but had taken up the cause, the very cross of Christ,—the cross, because it had been the occasion of the deepest suffering in our life hitherto ; and of Christ, because the suffering had come ever out of our desire and persistent search after the true way of life in all things, both of the body and spirit.

Under similar promptings and convictions others have entered upon labors to which they have felt themselves called in the name of Spiritualism, through trial and suffering finding their better purification. Many inquirers, however, have been prone to think that in their simple acceptance of the spiritual phenomena they have not only found the way to heaven, but have entered the very gates ! To such we would say, there is no high-road opened now, more than before, upon which an idler has merely to set his foot and find himself drawn up to the heavenly mansions

without effort or labor on his part. The recorded errors of early Spiritualists are like gravestones, marking the spots where the seekers after modern spiritual things have been drawn off into pitfalls sunk of old to catch all who might wander from the true path; while the successes of others only point the way up the steep ascent, which is yet full of dangers and obstacles. That these difficulties should become less and less numerous, and more easily overcome as the pilgrim advances in the search after truth, is to be expected, and will be realized in proportion as he is faithful to his highest promptings at and from the start; and so each succeeding generation of men will advance on the pathway of true life, as the generation passing away has brought the race nearer to a condition able to welcome the coming of God's kingdom. But there is work, much work, to be done yet.

Seventeen years ago we were permitted to publish in the "Monthly Religious Magazine" two articles under the title of "Modern Spiritualism."¹ These seventeen years have not been without their experience of continued personal investigation, and of very marked progress in the widespread acceptance of the cardinal points and facts of Spiritualism. It may help the minds of those who are not likely to come otherwise into present contact with what seems to us

¹ A third article was added to these two, and the three were published, in 1863, in the small book before noted.

a momentous subject, to read of it again here,¹ and learn something of the work it has accomplished and is still doing in the development of ideas essential to man's progress, against the continued indifference or opposition of the most cultured minds, and the united desire and effort of old science to put down the ghost that will keep rising, with ever-renewed power, to baffle and disappoint all efforts for its suppression. The old cry, "Who will show us any good?" is repeated by many of modern Spiritualism. Having found much good, we would endeavor to show it to others,—not for the sake of proselyting, for experience has shown too well that belief in these things cannot be forced before its time, but for the enlightenment of many who, having never sought to penetrate within even the outermost circle of physical manifestations, are waiting the good Father's time to bring them into the fold which we believe will some day hold all the children of men.

The most obvious good from the advent of modern Spiritualism would seem to be the demonstration or evidence of things *heretofore unseen*, which is given in its simplest manifestations. Doubtless there are many minds so well settled—it may be only through inheritance and unquestioning habit—in their convictions as to the momentous question of the after-life, that it is not easy for them to understand the needs

¹ "Unitarian Review," Nov. 1879.

of the very many others who, in seeking a reason for the faith that was in them, have been led off into the wilds of mysticism, or lost in the desert sands of materialism, and to whom the lowest forms of modern spiritual manifestations have brought the only light that could help them out of their difficulties. The tiny raps, so much abused by the wise in the wisdom of earth, have brought such comforting assurance to minds desponding of the future state, as all the reasoning of the pulpit and the demonstrations of mundane science could not have begun to afford. More than one proud philosopher has come down upon his knees before these simplest evidences of a continuing existence, and thanked the good Father that a way had been at last opened to him, small though it be, leading up to the heavenly mansions. Admitting, for the argument, the uncertainties of identity in spirit communication, the bare fact of these little sounds being produced under the guidance of an intelligent power, and coming plainly from behind that veil hitherto so impenetrable, has reached the minds too long habituated to material evidences to be able to spiritually discern a spirit presence. This age of material advancement could not, at first, have recognized the nearer approach of the spirit spheres, except through material manifestations ; and in time we believe the age will lift its hands in gratitude for the evidences, however humble, vouchsafed to its great need !

As the next obvious good, may perhaps be named the testimony of modern Spiritualism upon the subject of Faith, which has occupied the Christian mind so much. The saving faith insisted upon so strenuously by evangelical disputants, as a condition precedent to salvation, and made a requirement of the church-member without which there could be no fellowship, under the light of Spiritualism is shown to be only a compliance with the common law of all life; *viz.*, that neither good nor evil can reach an unwilling recipient as they can the willing mind, and that nothing is so sure to impede progress in any direction as the lack of willingness to receive truth, whether it accord with preconceived opinions or not. Having once formulated its dogmas, the Church has been prone to resist innovation, and thereby necessarily to retard growth in any direction of thought not in harmony with its settled creeds. It has been slow to understand the simple meaning of such words of the Master as "Thy faith hath made thee whole,"—attributing a mystical value to the acceptance of certain forms of belief, when the whole virtue of the condition denominated Faith is simply in its receptivity, or willingness to receive. The testimony of Spiritualism in this direction is interesting and instructive, showing through all the forms of manifestation the same undeviating law, whether in the first approaches of opinionated scientists to the simplest physical

demonstrations of the after-life, or in the seekings of avowed believers after the more hidden things of the spirit, where the faculty of spiritual discernment is called into action. The state of mind of the investigator has again and again proved a stumbling-block to the manifestations, when the gathering has been made wholly or mostly of scientific experts, who will insist upon applying their old mundane tape-measure to conditions utterly foreign to such use. Often, too, have companies of avowed Spiritualists failed to reach the inner sanctuary by their lack of the childlike receptive condition of mind, which alone can find out the heavenly mysteries. The lesson shown in the violent conversion of the Apostle Paul still fails to reach the minds of men learned in things pertaining to the earth plane, so that as a class they will not, perhaps cannot, receive the new philosophy, until brought into it by some prostrating experience, from which they may rise wiser and better men. The few marked exceptions only serve, as usual, to prove the rule ; and, as in other steps of the world's development, the new knowledge has found favor with the humbler, before gradually working up into the higher walks of earth life. Again and again, truth must need be cradled in a manger. Should it be said that such kind of receptive faith opens the way to evil as well as good, the reply is frankly : Yes ; such is the law of our being. The willingness to receive must

ever be directed to that which is good. We cannot escape this responsibility : it is inherent in the conditions of free-will, which is the birthright of humanity, and out of which will come the glory and the joy of man's final redemption.

To the fear sometimes expressed, that such knowledge of things spiritual would take away all occasion for that exercise of faith which trusts where it cannot see, so commended by the churches, and often blindly held to be one of the saving graces of the Christian profession, we would say that man need not be troubled lest he will ever advance so far in finding out God, that there will be nothing left for him on which to exercise this spirit of trust. As in mundane science, the further the student penetrates, the wider appears the field of discovery yet to be explored, so in things spiritual the most gifted seer reports of the fathomless beyond — the ever-opening, ever-receding mysteries of God.

Another good brought by modern Spiritualism is the light it has thrown upon the efficacy of Prayer. Hesitating to believe that the great Mind, by whom the universe has come into being and is hourly sustained, can be sufficiently concerned with the little things of individual experience to answer the calls of humanity, and accepting the idea of law in all the outworkings of the Divine Being, men have inclined more and more to doubt the efficacy of prayer. Un-

able to see the method of response, they have denied the possibility. Spiritualism solves the problem by showing the method. Prayers are the expression of the soul's desires. Earnestness and sincerity are the chief requisites for their potency. Now, just as a parent or friend hearing the prayer, or — what is equivalent — knowing the deep desire of a child, will labor to bring a response and satisfy the longing if it seem wise and good, so the friends about us, unseen by the natural eye, are near enough to hear our prayers, to know our deep desires, and equally to labor for their satisfaction. That they can and do thus influence events, — by acting upon the minds of others in the form, in whose power it is to bring about the answer to our prayers, as well as in other ways of their own, — is proved beyond a doubt by the facts of modern Spiritualism. To the question which at once comes to the inquirer, Shall we then address our prayers to the spirits and not to God? our reply is certainly, No. We should cripple the very power we would call to our aid by such asking. The mighty Spirit of God pervades the denizens of the spirit spheres, operating through them as part of its myriad agencies, as it does in its more apparent outworkings through external humanity. The reaching after that Spirit sets into action all the springs of being that are situated or conditioned so as to be moved by it; and the prayer, instead of being limited to one sole agency,

as it would be if addressed to one known spirit in the spheres about us, may call to our aid many unseen and unknown influences, glad to be the instruments of the divine Mind in answering the cries of earth's children. The use of prayer as a means or condition for bringing the soul into harmony with God is distinct from its efficacy for special response; but, in this direction also, Spiritualism shows how prayer to the good Father will move his loving angels to bring the heavenly peace and strength to the communing soul.

Another good in Spiritualism is its encouragement of Individuality, and independence of the old bonds of Creed and Church. No reliance on what another has done or suffered, no passport from any church, no forgiving of sins by the mouth of any prelate, no assumption of another's holiness, proves to be of avail, according to the unvarying testimony of Spiritualism. Every man must work out his own salvation: not without help from others, it may be, — for we are all members one of another, — but without benefit of the passion of any other, save as it has operated to show the way of life and instil the principle of sacrifice. To Liberal Christianity such views are not new; but the testimony of Spiritualism is not therefore to be repulsed: rather is it to be welcomed as a coadjutor in the work of liberalizing all churches; for it is testimony, not argument — evidence, not assertion.

Silently, but surely, it is doing its work in this direction, as is apparent to every unprejudiced observer ; — co-operating with and stimulating the efforts of the human mind of this day and generation to an understanding, such as has not yet been attained, of the “liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.” “Spiritualism,” says a recent inspirational speaker, “teaches the necessity of good works done for humanity, rather than intellectual submission to a tenet. The spirits who claim happy states of life [in the spirit spheres] invariably ascribe their condition to deeds rather than creeds.”

Interesting and important, too, is the testimony of Spiritualism upon the question of an Eternal Hell, for so many years one of the cherished tenets of the Christian Church, and still dwarfing by its terrors no small portion of the Christian fold. That there is punishment, and enough of it, for all the misdeeds of earth-life, is sadly proved by the “cries of remorse from those in the shadowy places” of the world beyond ; but everywhere and under all conditions the law of progression and development is proclaimed. The eternity (*aion*) of punishment is not everlasting, but, as the Greek word properly translated means, it is of indefinite duration, and determined by laws of being and states of life of which we know as yet but little, — pointing, however, always to a possible termination of the retribution, which has come as the

inevitable judgment of divine law broken or unheeded in earth life. As the kingdom of heaven was proclaimed to be within, so are the judgment-seat and the terrors of hell, according to Spiritualism, — each having its natural and necessary outworking and manifestation in surroundings which belong to the spiritual states so described. Dark as Erebus are the shadows enveloping some unhappy spirits, as they are seen by seers sufficiently developed; and bright as the natural eye has never seen, are the shining raiments of the “just made perfect.”

In this connection may be stated the testimony from the spirit spheres as to the suffering consequent upon neglect of opportunities for good, as well as wrong done. Frequently this is given in regard to the use of property during earth-life, and in the final disposition at its close. Holding with unrecognized greed to the things of earth, the earth-bound spirit, ere it passes beyond the control of its material possessions, too often seeks to tie the hands, and hearts too, of those who are to come into possession, and by ingenious devices to continue the sense of holding and controlling what it knows it must soon surrender. When such a spirit has passed over the river it cannot rise, because of the weight of neglected opportunities. It comes back; nay, it has not left the earth, though out of its material form, and cannot leave it, for the heavenly spheres, until relieved in some way of the

terrible burden of misused earthly possessions. Fear of retribution is not the highest motive to appeal to ; love, not fear, should be, and surely is to be, the rule of earth-life, as well as of the heavenly spheres. But the knowledge, — for it is knowledge, — which comes from the unvarying testimony of Spiritualism in this regard, must be a help to some minds thus led to hesitate ; men otherwise unmoved would become accessible to the approaches of their better angels, and obedient to the promptings of their own better natures.

Again, Spiritualism has done and is doing good by demonstrating the folly of attempting to conceal wrong. Mankind instinctively feel that the all-seeing Eye is upon them ; but the universality of the fact, and the seeming distance of the Ruler of the universe, encourage wrong-doers to a strange indifference to what should be a potently restraining influence. Shutting their eyes to God, they half believe that he is not looking at them when the moment of temptation and yielding comes. When it is understood that God sees and acts through many agencies, and that he is indeed ever beholding all his children of earth through the watchful eyes of dear ones “gone before,” — that a “cloud of witnesses” is at our right hand and at our left, counting among its number a father or mother, sister or brother, the nearest, dearest friend perhaps we have known, — it must “give us pause,” as it does and often has to sincere Spiritu-

alists, when we are led into paths of danger. The angel bands can and do bring helping hands and new strength in the hour of our need. They can and do thus aid those who are unable yet to recognize or admit the possibility of their ministrations,—but under difficulty, because of the unbelief which repels their approaches and continually checks the good they would gladly do. Witnesses they are of our daily acts and thoughts; closer than we know they come into our lives and have access to our inner chambers. From them, as from God and our own selves, there is no concealment.

From them, too, we learn the error of the old saying, “Speak nothing but good of the dead.” They come to us from their spirit abodes with their eyes opened to any ill conditions in which they have been removed from earth-life, and with entreaties urge upon us to help them relieve their souls of the weight of their wrong-doing by confession of the most open kind. Speak truth of the dead, is the new teaching; but speak it kindly, tenderly, forgivingly. Having sought to cover up their wrong-doing when in earth-life, they return to relieve the burden of sin by acknowledging the wrong and seeking forgiveness of the injured. Again and again has this been demonstrated to inquirers into Spiritualism. Again and again has the cry come back from the “spheres beyond,” beseeching that there should be no more

concealment, but open confession and endeavor to right the wrong.

More valuable to many minds has been the development, through Spiritualism, of the ancient gifts of the spirit, which had so nearly died out. Of themselves deeply interesting and important, their recent manifestation has illuminated the records of past ages, especially of the early centuries of the Christian Church, and helped many persons to accept the testimony of those days who could not before believe. In general it may be said that Spiritualism has thrown a light upon the Scriptures which was greatly needed by this doubting, questioning, probing age; and with all the talk of some extremists about throwing the Bible away, it has brought to many, many inquirers illustration and explanation of the old records which has given them new meaning and value. We heartily commend the testimony of Spiritualism to all who need help in this direction.

To our mind the work of modern Spiritualism upon social questions, and especially upon the marriage relation, has seemed perhaps the most interesting and important. While it is to be admitted that varying ideas of the marriage relation have been expressed through spirit mediums, and some on a low plane of selfishness, we hold that on one point the testimony of the spirit-spheres has been uniform, — though with varying application, according to the development of

the communicating spirit, or of the medium, or of the inquirer, or perhaps of them all. This point is, freedom for the love principle manifested in the marriage relation. That this freedom in its spiritual sense does not mean wild license; that it has regard to the eternal principle of truth, and must ever be held to that "service" of God "which alone is perfect freedom,"—there can be no doubt. Its practical application to the marriage relation is a call for purity,—for freedom from the tyrannical power of lust, and the abuse of opportunity under cover of law. It asserts the right, the bounden duty, rather, of woman, to whom the duty first belongs, to protect the fountains of life from every approach that is not actuated by love, and to hold the marriage relation sacred to the cause of parentage, for which it was divinely instituted. The free love of pure Spiritualism is, in fact, above the present development of most men and women, and not to be easily attained.

But this idea of freedom emanating from the higher spirit-spheres, in its simple statement, is one thing; in its form of acceptation and outworking it may be quite another, and various according to the conditions of development it finds to work upon. Thus it has come that so many phases of it have been manifested through mediums and among Spiritualists; some of which have so justly offended the better sense of those still abiding under the old dispensation. How the

freedom proclaimed for woman has been misinterpreted, — how it has been construed into a warrant for open breach of the laws of the land, and bold defiance of established usage, threatening sometimes to subvert all social order, and causing the very name of Spiritualism to be an offence, — is too well known to be rehearsed here. The fault has been not in Spiritualism, but in its professors, who have fallen into error out of their former states. Early Christianity had to pass through similar experience. The sharp rebukes in some of the epistles to the recently converted heathens of Corinth, show plainly how they committed excesses of intemperance, and yet graver offences, at their love-feasts. They could not bear the opportunity offered in the new rites, which proved a temptation to their old conditions. How mistaken the more sober-minded of the unconverted of the Corinthians would have been, to attribute to Christianity the vices which seemed thus to find expression through the Christian rites, we of this day can easily see. Not less mistaken are those who attribute to Spiritualism the excesses of some of its believers, which are only evidences of the low grade of development they had attained under their old dispensation. Let not the uninitiated be too ready to believe that such extravagances show the real meaning of the doctrine, or illustrate the low degree of the angel messengers who brought it. Rather let them inquire into the

inner mystery of the opening dispensation of love, and learn how far it is above the average development of our race to-day, and to what heights of aspiration and attainment it is now calling the children of earth.

To the command, given of old, to subdue the earth, no higher obedience can be rendered by man than this subjection of the appetites of the physical to his spiritual nature. In other and less difficult ways must he learn obedience before he can attain this greatest of his achievements. In all the conditions of his natural life which combine to make up his physical well-being, especially in the food with which he builds up and repairs the daily waste of his body, must he learn to give heed to the voice within, selecting ever that which will conduce to the welfare of both body and mind,—habit soon making easy and joyful what at first may seem like sacrifice.

There must be struggle to attain all this, taking man as he is in his best average development, and patience, too,—“patience with one another, patience with ourselves, patience with God,”—ere the great end will be reached. That the millennial day is to come, is believed by most Christians. It is to be brought about, not by any cataclysm, not by any sudden fiat of the Almighty, but by and through better men and better women, better institutions, better philosophy, better teachings, better lives. Man can

never reach his highest development until woman rises to the dignity of her great calling, and, holding herself obedient to the voice of the Spirit, brings herself and him into perfect accord with the Father's will in all these things.

These high doctrines in relation to the marriage state came to us in our contemplations seventeen years and more ago, and were confirmed by the influences ready to communicate through the medium mentioned in the little book before referred to.¹ Since then we have more than once reasoned upon the subject with communicating intelligences, and with mediums whose life-experiences had brought them to a recognition of the higher law. Thus, — while admitting that lower promptings, even to the lowest possible, have come from those in the spirit-world yet grovelling in the mire of their old earth-life, calling for the apostle's injunction, verily "to try the spirits," — we claim that these higher laws have been developed in the minds of truth-seekers in modern times of the spirit, and have been pronounced through their mediumship, by direct communication from their spirit-bands, and that such are now the accepted teachings among advanced spirits in the spheres above, as well as among those still in earth-life. Having studied the subject in its various aspects, and with ever earnest inquiry, since our first knowledge

¹ Modern Spiritualism, by a Bible Spiritualist. 1863.

of these laws, we have found them in every way confirmed as rational and true.

We have thus spoken of some of the leading points in which Spiritualism is bringing its testimony and doing its work in aid of human development. A comprehensive view discloses the relation of this modern movement of the spirit-spheres to the dispensations which have preceded it, and especially its bearing upon the question of the Christ-coming, which is believed by so many Christians to be imminent at this time.

That it is ushering in a new dispensation, wherein spiritual power shall uproot the false developments of the day, break up the artificial systems — social, civil, and religious — by which man's higher nature is now fettered, and establish all the relations of life, all customs, institutions, and all philosophy, upon the firm basis of spiritual love and truth, is believed by most Spiritualists. Old creeds and dogmas wither before its fervent heat. Fermentation everywhere is trying the strength of old conditions, and bursting the bonds made up of falsehood and sham. But with all the seeming confusion there is underlying order, for the movement is sustained by the arm of the good Father, impelled and directed by his almighty will. It seems, indeed, the second Christ-coming; but not in the way expected by the Adventists, who, in their conception of a visible Messiah coming to judge the quick and

the dead, are as mistaken as were the Jews of old in looking for a temporal kingdom under their expected leader. Did not the Christ-man say that he should come like a thief in the night? Has he not so come now, with his myriad angels, trying and judging from behind the clouds which screen the mighty presence from the material sight of earth-life? He comes, not as a personal king to erect a personal kingdom, but to establish the Christ-principle of divine love and truth in the minds and hearts of the children of men. God's kingdom is at hand, ushered in by the angels that know and do his will.

We understand the operation of spirit power in these latter days to be twofold. There is a widespread, general quickening of all the conditions of earth-life, affecting the good and the bad, the developed and the undeveloped, to activity beyond their usual state,—the Spirit of God moving over the deep; and there is a special, direct influence exercised by different spirits or bands of spirits upon individuals, according to the states in which they are found,—thus trying the condition of each and all, and quickening them to show their inner lives by deeds, and throw off, through sudden impulse often, the cloaks under which their real state has been concealed, perhaps even to themselves. In this way Spiritualism has sometimes seemed to encourage evil ways as well as good. Closer observation shows that the law of individual respon-

sibility is not to be broken. The very possibility of low conditions in the seeker after these things of the spirit opening the way to and attracting undeveloped spirits, who will be ready to encourage the low seeking, is only a call to every one now in earth-form to look closely within, and see to it that no evil conditions are lurking there, lest they be quickened to expression beyond the control of their unhappy victim. The danger is equally great, if not greater, because unperceived, though perhaps not so immediate, if we do not directly seek communion with the spirits; for they are about us, whether we know it or not, watching every opportunity to reach and move us according to the tendencies they find in us.

The movement of the spheres above has come now because man has reached a point in his development where he can and must rise to better understanding and higher views of the future, as well as of his present life. To help that struggle for development, Spiritualism suggests possibilities, not by way of coercion, but of inducement for him to come up higher. It is for him to receive the suggestions, weigh them carefully in the balance of truth, by which he must test everything, and to reject or strive to live up to them, according to his convictions. But let him see to it that low motives do not underlie his own life, if he would distinguish the true from the false. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Through the wisdom of the pure heart, man must find the truth of these latter days. "Try the spirits," was the injunction given long ago. It has momentous meaning now ; but let us remember that we, also, are being tried by them, and see to it that our record will bear their keen scrutiny. Judging and being judged, they need our co-operation and help. They call us to join with them in the great work of redemption.

The words of a recent inspirational speaker are apt in this connection :¹ "An impulsion sweeps toward the earth ; every heart is touched, every mind is delicately tried, every soul is attuned ; those who are ready are at once receptive. It is not simply that you receive it when you seek, but you cannot seek until there is some measure of truth within you. It is not simply that it is forced upon your brain and attention from the spiritual world, but you are tried and tested whether you are in any degree ready, or whether you are in any degree capable of serving the advancement of this thought ; and the spirit-world know to whom they minister, — know to whom they bring the message of life ; and it is brought to you according to your need."

To be true unto the truth, physically and spiritually, is the demand of the hour. He who fails in either will find out his weakness in the easy falling under temptation, and the lowering tone of his physical

¹ Mrs. Cora L. V. Richmond.

health,—happy if he is not brought into dire straits of bodily disease, or led out to be a monument of shame for his evil doings. It is more dangerous now for a man to come within the reach of temptation than it was thirty years ago,—there is such quickening of every element of his nature, causing the evil conditions to ferment and seek expression as never before.

Never was there a time in the world's history when there was so much need of the daily prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." The sunlight of God's love and truth is quickening all conditions with its kindling rays; and as the great deep bubbles and boils, impurities must need be brought to the surface, and at times seem almost to hopelessly cover and conceal the purer elements beneath. But love and truth will in the end prevail; God's kingdom will come, and humanity rise purified from the fiery trial.

Of Mediumship something should be said in this brief showing of the work, progress, and outlook of modern Spiritualism. To those who have given the subject but little attention, mediumship is looked upon as a kind of cataleptic state, worthy of little consideration and less sympathy; the time having gone by when it was by the same persons deemed all trickery and deception. Closer observation shows that the world has never known greater occasion for kindly interest and helpful sympathy than is to be found in

those who are called to the labor of aiding directly in the opening of this new dispensation through the intercommunion of the spirit-spheres and humanity in earth-life. All are one on both sides of the veil of time, — members one of another ; the great family of man seems drawing together for such final occupation and enjoyment of earth and its attendant spheres as has been promised for the ransomed through all the centuries. The time is at hand for parting the veil which has heretofore screened the spirit-land from the vision of dwellers upon earth. The work to which mediums are called — to be channels of demonstration and communication, preparing the way for the more open intercourse yet to come — is of momentous value. That some, perhaps many, have not themselves understood the character of their calling, and so have failed to hold up the high standard of love and truth which would, at first thought, be expected of them, is to be attributed to the power of old conditions, out of which their spirits have not arisen ; while yet they have been available for some phases of the work to be accomplished. Much may be said in extenuation of the shortcomings of mediumship. That it is no light calling, has been too often proved in the labors and sufferings of its subjects. It has been, indeed, a heavy cross to bear ; not, however, without its crown, for it brings ever an underlying sense of happiness through all the suffering, with periods of exaltation

hardly known without it. But none can know, who have not had the experience, what agony of spirit, and sometimes acute physical pain, have been borne by persons of mediumistic development in their contact with and rough usage by conditions of earth-life wholly inappreciative of their delicate organization and sensitive state. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," has been wrung from the lips of many a martyr since they were first uttered by the great Sufferer; but never more than in these days of modern mediumship. Surely these things ought to be and will be soon better understood, and the chosen laborers better cared for.

All hail to the good time at hand, which is to usher in, through tribulation, purer, brighter, happier conditions for the children of men,—to be realized, in a measure, even by some of those who now tread the earth. But even with willingness of mind, it would, with rare exceptions, require more than one generation to overcome the power of inheritance and habit, so as to live fully up to the higher law in all things. There must be sincere conviction, and then long and patient striving, ere the goal can be reached. It can and will be attained, not by any startling operation of divine power, though the development may be comparatively rapid, after all these centuries of preparation. It must be by growth of the Christ principle in the human heart. The kingdom, God's kingdom, is coming

through better men and better women ; and these must be developed through better living, out of *truer, holier birthrights* than fall to the lot of most of earth's children now.

Would that these words could reach the minds and hearts of all who remain stagnant in their old inherited conditions, too content with their spiritual riches to seek the wealth now offering to humanity through channels opened under the influences, though not all under the much-abused name, of modern Spiritualism ! Let them not be too sure of their position, or shut their eyes to their lack of spiritual gifts — and to the many manifest proofs that they have hardly yet begun to receive the knowledge of God given to the world eighteen centuries ago ! Again the voice of the Spirit cries out, “Woe unto you rich !” Woe unto you churches, that have builded costly monuments of faith and zeal, but for heavenly manna have gathered too much the lifeless chaff of creeds and dogmas, the empty husks of formal observance, with which to feed the hungry souls crying to you for bread ! Regenerating humanity will not much longer be held in bondage. Look to your treasures, and see that they bear the stamp of God's own imprint, lest ye perish through very poverty of spirit ; while every human home must become a house of prayer, and every fireside an altar to the living God.

NOVEMBER, 1879.

II.¹

THE foregoing article offers a brief exposition of the work, progress, and outlook of Modern Spiritualism. Its necessary limits exclude much having important bearing upon the meaning and value of the new conditions.

Spiritualism, as there claimed, by its direct testimonies, throws light upon the path in which men have been groping, — makes clearer to their vision the impediments to their progress, — shows anew the truth and the life by which they can be brought to better development, and, in general, calls them to come up higher. It brings a power that tries all conditions. The companionships of earth-life try our hearts and minds, affecting their action in daily experience; the influence of those about us, unseen by the natural eye, is trying our lives yet more, and in ways little realized, until some action declares our states. From their searching scrutiny there can be no concealment, and from the judgment of our inner selves, no escape; while good angels would lead all men to be, in humbleness of spirit, children of God, whose love, whose wisdom, whose power, seem now ready to pour upon those who will receive, as never before vouchsafed.

¹ Unitarian Review for September, 1882.

Through recognition of the spirit agency, both mind and heart are the more readily quickened. With deep desire and earnest prayer in heart and mind, the doors of the spirit may be opened, so that none but heavenly visitors can enter.

The subtle forces engaged in the manifestation of spiritual or supernatural phenomena, whether of high or low degree, have conditions peculiarly their own, and are subject to laws not fully understood as yet, but which are, nevertheless, as fixed as the laws regulating natural phenomena. In one regard, however, there is a law common to the investigation of both natural and spiritual phenomena. It is true of science on the spiritual as on the natural plane, that no man can make *original* investigation unless his heart be filled with sincere love. Pure intellect can often follow up and seem to occupy the tracks of other minds which have preceded, under the illumination of love; but it cannot make sound, successful, original research under its own cold light alone. He who would find out God in things of the spirit must have the love of God in his heart. Doubtless, increasing knowledge of God in the mind quickens the heart's love and gives it direction, while it enlarges the sphere of its manifestation; but the love must be there to be quickened. The difference is wide between the inquiry of the mind alone into the facts and philosophy of spiritual or supernatural phenomena, and the seeking of the

heart after pure spirituality in things of the spirit. The two need to be combined for attainment of the broad science of Modern Spiritualism.

Humble-mindedness is always an indispensable condition in this, as in every other inquiry into truth. The valley of humility lies ever before the mount of vision. The failure of many (so called) scientific investigations into the ordinary, external phenomena of Spiritualism has been instructive on this point. Coming to the examination with little love in their hearts, and to their lack of love adding pride of intellect, such inquirers have been baffled, and refused admission at the very outer gates of that portal which may open, according to the real desire of the seeker, up through the blessed angels to the very presence of God.

The claim of Spiritualism, that a new dispensation is opening to earth-life through its manifold agencies, has awakened a desire in the minds of many, by whom the phenomena cannot yet be accepted as veritable, to know the supposed relation of the new conditions, if true, to their old faith. Allusion has been made heretofore to what seemed to be the general relation of Spiritualism to Christianity. A closer relation will be found in the development and operation of the *spiritual perceptions* under these modern influences, which we would endeavor briefly to set forth.

Realization of spirit presence through physical

manifestation — whether of the startling character of recent “materializations,” or of the simpler kind, such as mentioned in the little book before referred to — is not sufficient of itself to meet the craving of the soul to reach up through the avenues of sense and liftings of the spirit till it can find the Father; but it is an important remove from the ordinary material plane of life. The fact of being face to face with a spirit on the other side of the veil of time, once realized through personal experience, breaks utterly and forever the spell of materiality, which has overgrown the spiritual perceptions of humanity, and made the average conception of spiritual things so vague and unsatisfactory. That spell once broken, the way is opened to earnest seekers for recognition of mental and spiritual impressions from invisible sources, leading to a development of the spiritual perceptions which will come gradually, and, with steadfast desire in the mind for the highest and best, will prove to be reliable and good.

To have the spiritual perceptions thus developed is to realize far more than the possibility and fact of spirit communing and intercourse. It is to have mind and heart opened to a recognition of spiritual elements and conditions, in a manner and to a degree that can hardly be understood, and certainly not enjoyed, by those living wholly on the natural plane, however pure their lives, or even spiritual their desires.

It is the opening of a new sense, but with wider range than any and all the natural senses, and more exquisite in its varied enjoyments, by as much as things of the spirit are above things of the natural world. Spiritualizing the natural senses, each in their special direction, to perception of spiritual sights and sounds, to recognition of finer magnetisms in the touch of angel hands, to unwonted satisfaction and enjoyment in the elements of simple food, to the scent of richest fragrance from flowers of heaven, brought by loving friends, perhaps not visibly, — for such spiritual openings are not, as yet, always active together, — the development of spiritual perceptions leads to intelligent acquirement and realization of the various *gifts of the spirit*, of which the Christian world has read so often and understands so little. In addition to these comes now the possibility of unfoldment and insight into all the spiritual elements underlying the whole natural world.

Such experience leads yet further to a guidance within the spirit, which may thus, by a process of growth, learn to draw from the very depths of God's love and wisdom, through the manifold agencies of his appointment, both on the natural and spiritual planes. Such guidance is not an after-recognition following experience, but an influence more or less present to the consciousness, and quickly responsive to the seeking of the spirit for right direction in every

movement of thought, prompting and leading in every act. It calls for no mere passive state, inviting the mental faculties to listless inactivity. On the contrary, the more developed those faculties may be, the larger is the range of action for the guidance; only they must be held in ever humble willingness to be led by the divine hand, while eager to do all their part in carrying out the promptings. The reason will not fail to throw its light upon any and every work to which man is called, and check the folly of blind impulse, while it waits upon the spiritual man to find what the work to do is. The more developed and active the reasoning powers, the more ready is the divine hand to help, when sought after in true humbleness. Said the voice in the old fable, "Put thy shoulder to the wheel; then call on Jupiter, and he will help thee." But, while not requiring a mere passive state, the spirit must be calm within, or it cannot perceive the promptings aright, nor hear the still, small voice correctly. The waters must be unruffled, if they would receive and reflect the heavenly images without distorted lines. Impatient zeal may be as great a hindrance as over-confidence in the intellectual faculties.

Recognizing and grateful for the part which spirit agency takes in such direction, the earnest seeker will find the possibility and actual fulfilment of those words of the Psalmist, "He shall give his angels

charge over thee, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." He must not be discouraged if the impressions of such guidance come faintly at first. Most things which grow well grow slowly, and from small beginnings. Neither should he falter when the promptings lead to painful experience, except to question the sincerity of his purpose and the reasonableness of his conduct. If the asking has been true, the result will show that the guidance has been good in the lessons of life which were needed, and could come only through such teaching. Thus Spiritualism, by awakening and educating the spiritual perceptions, makes clearer and broader to this age of development the way by which, with earnest striving and patient waiting, humanity may rise higher and higher in spiritual attainment, co-working with God and the angels, until at last all its actions shall be outworkings of the Divine Spirit, and the promises of old be fulfilled in the life of every child of earth.

If the spiritual state thus to be attained appear the same as that considered in Christian churches as the legitimate result of true Christian development, it follows that Spiritualism is not antagonistic to Christianity. It is, indeed, its latter-day coadjutor; and, while bringing the two-edged sword of truth, like Christianity, it comes to fulfil, not to destroy. To the minds of hasty observers, the work of Spiritualism has been a puzzle, if not an offence, in the varied

character of its communications and teachings, as a whole, compared with the single purpose of spiritual unfoldment manifested in the Christian dispensation. But the way opened to one must need be opened to all the spirit-spheres, which thus bring the operative power of judgment to every condition of earth-life, and in a measure come to judgment themselves. Through all the various teachings and communication of things spiritual, however, the higher angels have been and are instilling and directly communicating lessons of wisdom and elements of divine love from the Christ-sphere, supported by such assurances as conditions have permitted, even to the surpassing sense of peace believed to be of the very Christ. Thus the promises of old are being fulfilled, though not in ways expected; and, though men have hardly yet begun to live up to the truth that was and is in Christ Jesus, the angel-bands are bringing to earth-life new elements and ushering in a new era, which, in its outworkings, shall fulfil a new and yet larger Messianic hope, to meet the spiritual needs of advancing humanity.

Admitting gratefully the advantage of their starting-point, by birth and education in a Christian community, many Spiritualists have found it due to the truth to declare that they are directly indebted to Spiritualism — beginning with the alphabet of physical manifestations, the rappings and table-tippings — for a new life, which is to their old life as light to darkness. The

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actuality of their own spirit — of spirit life as distinct from the natural life, and of spirit existence in the life to come, was so vague to their comprehension, before the light of modern Spiritualism dawned upon their minds, that they could get no real hold of any things of the spirit. "Our Father" was comparatively an "unknown God," whom they "worshipped ignorantly;" and Jesus, a distant friend, whose life they could admire, but whose great love they could neither fully receive nor reciprocate. The truths of pure, unsectarian, gospel Christianity are, indeed, the foundation of all true life, by showing the Father and spiritualizing the moral law in those commands, "Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself," on which "hang all the Law and the Prophets." Spiritualism, in its appointed time, comes to give a reality to spirit, which could hardly be known before, and helps the mind to a better understanding and the heart to a more living sense of God as spirit, who is to be "worshipped in spirit and in truth." Knowing that Spiritualism has come a helper to many, substantially in the manner described, we cannot but add our conviction that an honest admission would show to very many more a similar need, calling for similar help, in these days when materialism has so overshadowed and imperceptibly grown into the lives of all. It was hardly to be expected, indeed, that man could take such leaps in

material development and make no discoveries on the spiritual side of his life. Such a one-sided strain could not long be borne; the equilibrium of his being would be destroyed. Closing in the spiritual perceptions and stunting spiritual growth, the whirl of excitement on the material plane in modern times would have driven mankind mad, if some such additional help had not broken in from the skies to save them.

With the spiritual perceptions opened, the most practical life becomes spiritualized, as every life should be. Spirit mediumship, as we have before intimated, according to its character and degree of sensitiveness, requires more or less relief from the ordinary pressure of practical duties, a certain setting apart for the special service; but Spiritualism, in its simple opening of the spiritual perceptions, which is its normal work with all true seekers, will lead no man or woman away from the duties which practical life demands at their hands. Material interests have their divinely appointed laws, which must be obeyed, and which, under true guidance of the spirit, will not be ignored. Spiritual development cannot contravene these laws, but only operate to give them their most beneficent expression. To the humblest laborers the divine guidance can come to lead and cheer them on, so that, in the most commonplace details, they may feel themselves to be co-workers with God. But, until the whole of humanity is opened to the new life,

there must be struggle, and perhaps suffering, for those whose light shines upon darkness that "comprehendeth it not." Through all the weary centuries has this guidance been seeking to lead and help man in his struggles for development; but it has failed of due recognition and accomplishment, because the diviner elements of his being have been so covered over with the scales of ignorance on the one hand, or of intellectual conceit on the other, as to allow only a partial approach of the manifold agencies of the ever-waiting spirit of God.

Laboring to raise mankind out of the sloughs into which they have fallen through ignorance and indifference, the higher agencies of Spiritualism are not deterred from their work by false delicacy or artificial considerations. Viewing man in his twofold aspect, — the spiritual and the natural, — they seek to make known what are the elements which have their life wholly on the natural plane of his being, and what on the spiritual, placing the spiritual always in the supremacy. Looking thus at the marriage relation, alluded to in our previous article, right understanding of which lies at the very foundation of social science, though to some minds it is almost a forbidden subject, it appears that on the natural plane marriage springs from the attraction of magnetisms; and that far too often these are the controlling, if not the only, forces actuating human mating. These do give rise

to emotions of love; but such emotions, being from their origin wholly on the natural plane, are selfish, and, like all other selfish promptings, seek selfish gratification, leading to fruits of selfishness. In every true marriage there is spiritual love also, which may be known by its seeking the good of another rather than its own gratification, and by not being exhausted, but rather growing, through expression. Human mating being comparatively free from natural limitations, the selfish promptings, which are equally strong in the natural man as in all other forms of life below him, must be held in restraint by the spiritual man. Out of his freedom comes man's special responsibility, in this relation as in all others, of enlightened self-control, which must look to *divine purpose* for its direction and strength. Constrained by the higher love, the marriage relation is lifted to its proper plane; and obedience to divine law, as shown in purpose, becomes both possible and easy.

Such constraint is no mere asceticism. Sincere inquiry will make plain what the purpose and law are, and what are the obstacles to obedience, as well as the occasion for promulgation of these views in the present average state of the marriage relation: obedience in this regard being an indispensable step in the progress of humanity toward establishing spiritual supremacy in all the relations of life,—that essential basis of God's "kingdom on earth," for which the

centuries have been praying that it come "as in heaven." It is due to Spiritualism that this call for higher life should be accredited to its influence and suggestion, in happy contrast with ideas which, at the opening of its work, have obtained a limited hold upon some of its more forth-putting believers, and left a temporary stain upon its fair name, that would not have been possible but for the weakness of old conditions thus brought to judgment.

Marriage has been defined to be the effort of spirit to ultimate itself in form. It is plain that the quality of the ultimation must depend upon the character of the spirit involved, whether that be on the plane of pure, unselfish love, or on the lower plane of selfish gratification. Let true spiritual marriage underlie the natural mating, with the life on the natural plane directed by a holy desire to build up and sustain the body as a temple for the indwelling of a pure spirit, and the true intent of the marriage relation in earth-life will be wrought out in such lives, such homes, and such beautiful offspring as humanity are not often blessed with now. The subject is momentous, and demands the fullest consideration. Spiritualism proclaims in general that better social conditions are at hand, waiting only for man's willingness to welcome them. This cannot be until these grave matters are taken into the thoughts, and worked out in the lives of women and men. In the name of God, pure

Spiritualism demands that the divine purpose in all the relations of life be sought and followed out. Coworking with God and his agencies, it rests with man to help on the coming of his kingdom.

In this connection we would allude briefly to the joining of hands at their gatherings, to which the attention of Spiritualists, as well as of outside observers, has been seriously called. The joining of hands on such occasions has sometimes proved to be more than the old conditions could bear, and selfishness has crept in to mar and prevent the otherwise harmonizing interchange of magnetic influence. Like the love-feasts of the early Christians, those meetings have tried the old conditions in the balance of spiritual intent, and too often found them wanting. The results are ground for argument against entering into such relations unguardedly, and do show the error of joining in promiscuous gatherings, where the motives of all present may not be equally sincere and unselfish; but they furnish no reason for refusing to join in the seeking, where a sincere purpose is known to control. There ought to be no safer or better place for this joining of hands in spiritual seeking than in the home circle. Try the spirits honestly, devoutly, reverently toward God, and there need be no fear of evil consequences, while the way may thus be opened to the highest spiritual unfoldment.

The disposition of seekers in Modern Spiritualism

to be contented with witnessing supernatural phenomena, without following up to the higher things of the spirit, was to be expected at first. By degrees, a larger and deeper interest has been and will doubtless be yet more awakened; while experience is showing that those words of the Apostle, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, . . . and have not charity [love], I am nothing," are as true now as when they were spoken. To *spiritualize* the *natural*, as Jesus labored to spiritualize the moral, so that the divine spirit and uses which underlie all things in the natural shall have due recognition and full expression, is the work of Modern Spiritualism,—not to astonish by external wonders, or merely gratify curiosity about the conditions of life in other spheres of existence. Heretofore, when spirit forces have drawn near to earth-life, the manifestations of their presence and power have seemed marvellous. As the work of development goes on, and harmonious relations are established, with open communion and communication between the natural and the spiritual worlds, these manifestations will no longer be exceptional or in any sense strange. The call for signs and wonders will cease; and humanity, drawing nearer to God, will move on, happy in fulfilling its varied part in the ever-repeating miracle of daily life. Such are the promises of the New Dispensation.

SEPTEMBER, 1882.

III.

A NEW DISPENSATION! These momentous words have been written under full conviction — based upon facts of external observation and inner experience — that this world of ours, after its long and weary centuries of preparation, is entering, has indeed entered, upon a new era of development; something more than the growth which is always going on, — differing from what has gone before by discrete degree, though resting upon antecedent epochs as its necessary foundation.

With all the recent rapid development on the material plane of earth-life, the new era is pre-eminently one of spiritual unfoldment. Modern Spiritualism cannot be said to constitute, or to embrace, the fulness of this dispensation; it is rather the broad way through which the wonders and the glories of the new life are opening upon earth. How far the facts and experience on which this conviction rests can be shared by all, depends largely upon the receptiveness of each. As of old, men having eyes may not see, and ears may not hear, the signs of the times; or hearing and seeing, they may not comprehend their import, though unable to find other satisfactory interpretation.

The method of procedure has been in establishing the basis on which the higher manifestations could rest, through the evidence given on the natural plane, of the actuality and nearness of spirit identities existing and at work on the other side of the veil,—which veil is every day becoming less and less obstructive to communication between the natural and the spirit spheres: and by the inspiration and very apparent quickening work of these spirit forces, which, whether recognized or not, are moving the world of humanity so potently now to new thought and action. History tells of other similar operations of the spirit-spheres upon earth-life; but these have been less potent and extensive than now, when the preparations are more complete, the conditions more ready to receive the great impulse, more ripe for development. No other view of our times furnishes rational explanation of the turmoil which, for the past twenty-five years and more, has prevailed over the face of our globe, through individual, social, and national experience, showing such universal quickening. Modern Spiritualism furnishes a key to the mystères of modern life, on whatever side they may be examined,—the very forces of nature feeling the impulse, and startling humanity into enquiry of the whence and the whither, as never before. To some minds, alarmed by the apparent quickening of evil, the moral world seems to be hopelessly rushing to destruction in deeds

of wickedness ; while others rejoice in the more than equal outgrowth of the better elements combining so manifestly to meet and overcome the rising evil. Such spiritual conflict found vent in our own Civil War, with its manifold experiences, including the horrors of Andersonville prisons and the mercies of sanitary commissions, — each and all working out and illustrating the purification through which men and nations have to pass before rising to the baptism of the new birth into a new and more blessed epoch.

That such an event as the opening of a new era should come in the secret manner which has thus far characterized this spiritual epoch, is in accord with the law of all development, which is from within outward. In the secret chambers of earth, hidden from the light of the sun and the eye of man, the seeds of all growing things have ever been laid to germinate. Only in the higher councils could the processes and times of the new unfoldment be known or anticipated.

We have said that the new era is one pre-eminently of the spirit. External motives, having regard wholly to material ends, will give way to the higher motives of inner purpose and use. This idea has been proclaimed by inspired teachers, and accepted by well-ordered minds, as the true rule of man's life, through all the centuries of his slow development. The time has come when it must hold full sway, and mankind

cease to be ruled by the things they now think to possess. Material development has been a necessary antecedent. The spiritual elements could find small opportunity for growth until the creature necessities of food, raiment, and dwelling-place were provided. Man's first efforts have been to procure these; and easily has he become so absorbed in their acquirement as to measure the success of his life by the amount and character of such possessions. Development of power over material elements has been and is the aim of our education. With the child's mind so directed, the man could hardly fail to be absorbed in the pursuit, which is well as a means but not as an end. The new era is to be characterized by material development for its uses only. The larger the use, the higher the value of the possession. Radical enquiry into all the uses of life already marks the times, under the great quickening through spirit influence. Not that the spirit-spheres do all the labor, making the individual life of earth only machine-work under their hands. Individuality is rather to grow more developed and pronounced, each human being feeling more and more the responsibility of filling his part in the economy of God's kingdom. Inspired by new thought and power from above, humanity will move on under the quickening impulse and the promptings of a great purpose, until raised to its proper plane of spiritual unfoldment.

The testimony of Spiritualism upon the subject of Inspiration has been interesting and valuable, leading to more intelligent understanding and a more rational philosophy of its operation than was possible to this materialistic age, or perhaps to any age, before the advent of the full modern spiritual phenomena. We say testimony, for it is not inference or argument. The evidence offered, and the uniform declaration from the spirit-spheres, unite to establish the fact that God works through individualized agencies in the mysteries of inspiration, as in all the other works and ways wherein man finds manifestation of His presence and power. The difference between the inspiration from the spirit-spheres, and that which proceeds from the more apparent influences of earth-life, is one of degree rather than of method. The various forms of the latter are so familiar that they do not attract attention unless manifested in very striking ways or on great occasions, though wonderful in their simplest form. The power of one mind over many, through word, look, or act, the charm of oratory, the quickening flash of the eye, the high purpose of noble deeds, the mere presence of a great man, — these all operate with inspiring influence. Well-spoken words are taken up and passed from mouth to mouth, carrying a power with every repetition, till the world rings with their inspiring sound. There is inspiration even from inanimate things, quickening every receptive

life and prompting often to new thought and action. By a similar, but more direct and complete process, intelligences from the spirit-spheres inspire receptive minds with thoughts already fashioned, — sometimes putting the very words into the mouths of the mediums held in more or less unconscious trance; or they quicken the receptive brain to its own fashioning of thought. Thus what has been accepted among men as divine inspiration, is shown and declared to have been given through individualized beings, angels of light and love, bringing heavenly truths from their heavenly homes to help and bless our mundane sphere. The familiar forms of spirit-control for purposes of communication, together with the manifestation of high inspirational powers in various forms of mediumship, have educated Spiritualists to accept this as the method of inspiration which, upon reflection, will be found to commend itself to the understanding, and to lead to a comprehensive philosophy of the whole subject; though it does militate, at first painfully, against the preconceived ideas which have been handed down from generation to generation of earth's children; children still, they are, in the hands of the All-Father, however enabled, through development, to comprehend more and more of his wondrous works and ways.

In olden time, "Thus saith the Lord" were the familiar words used by persons touched by the fire

from above. In later days, down to our own time, that which has seemed to be the "voice of God" has been heard within the inner consciousness of quickened minds. Such inspiration, whether of the past or the present, is one and the same in method. Angel-voices have spoken, and spirit-powers, high and low, have inspired, since man's life on earth began. We know not, perhaps we can never know, just where the inspiration begins; or draw the line between the thought generated by the action of our own minds, and thoughts instilled directly or indirectly from other spheres. We do know however that, of old and now, the character of the inspiration turns largely upon the development and motive of the person seeking and receiving it. The voice of God, through his manifold agencies in the spirit-spheres, comes to man as inspiration; and, through all these agencies, the selfish elements of the natural plane — which may still hang about the spirits who have gone out from visible earth-life steeped in those elements — are ever contending with the higher and more spiritual for supremacy, — ever ready to offer their enticing promises of advantage and pleasure, even to the eating of the forbidden fruit of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil."

These voices, this inspiration of the spirit, now as of old, must be brought to the bar of individual judgment for determination of their right or wrong, their wisdom or their folly. This may be done by

direct consideration of the promptings or teachings; or, as has been largely necessary in the course of human development up to this period, by measuring the doctrine through the otherwise recognized merit of the medium or teacher, whose example and acknowledged development have given authority to his words. There is no escape from this responsibility of direct or indirect individual adjudication. Spiritualists know, and have shown by the outworking of their experience in this regard, — to their own misery often, as well as to the present disparagement of their cause, — how surely every spirit that comes to them, whether through their own consciousness, or voiced by others, must be “tried;” how inspiration in every form must be weighed in the balance of such truth as lies in each one of us. The closest self-questioning and weeding out of low motive have proved the first, if not the only safeguard against grave errors, which have been possible through willingness to close the mind to the warnings of the monitor within, sometimes against the plainest dictates of common-sense, when seemingly authoritative suggestions have come to encourage the doing of what would be pleasant, or in accord with our own thinking, rather than what would be independently right and wise. The unhappy Pocassett child-slayer heard what seemed to him the voice of God, as did the assassin, Guiteau. Very possibly there were voices, promptings of the

spirit, mingled with their own unbalanced thinkings. It is all one and the same method of inspiration; its source and special direction turning, in their cases, as in others of like character, upon their own mental and moral weakness and folly, — making them, personally, fit subjects for commiseration and restraint, while their deeds call for utter condemnation. Such appears to have been, from the first, the method of divine working in this regard, leading by devious ways to the grand result of human development through experience. Acknowledged leaders, seers of their day, have in the past been lifted to the heights supreme, from which they could see and report the truths unfolded to their lofty aspirations. Modern Spiritualism would have all its children attain these heights, and live rejoicing on the plane of spiritual unfoldment which has been thus proclaimed, from the mountain-tops of human vision, to be the ultimate destiny of the race.

The development which receives the highest inspiration is not necessarily based upon what has been heretofore considered the highest culture; though culture, if true, is no bar, but rather an aid, to inspiration. "The pure in heart shall see God;" and this may or may not come of culture. Culture has in the past tended to ruts and limits. Developing the mind in some directions, it has closed it in others, so that new light could hardly find entrance. The uneducated

fishermen were called first; and then the learned Paul was broken into the service. Again and again have things of the spirit been "hid from the wise and the prudent." With progressing development these conditions must change. The culture now opening to earth-life, largely through the inspiration and quickening from the spirit-spheres, is to be wider and truer than that of the past. The false, because wholly external, motive of life will give way to a spiritual unfoldment and supremacy; so that the more the culture, the better and more enlarged the channels of communication, the better and higher the inspiration from the influences, God's messengers, ever waiting to draw near to the children of earth, as the way opens for them and conditions attract them.

It will be seen that this broad philosophy of inspiration includes within its scope all forms of divination from the earliest ages, many of which have been such stumbling-blocks to what has been claimed as the common-sense of the materialistic age now drawing to its close. It reconciles the difficulties which have so often perplexed the studies of the scholar and theologian in this regard; and — though it may not lead them to send embassies in hope of finding and reviving the oracles of old, or to give too willing credence to the stories of divine response through angel, ghost, or sprite, so abundant in the past — it will surely help them to more correct estimate of what

has so often been set down as ignorant credulity, and to find it no longer necessary to stultify the wise and good of past generations, in order to give any place to the statements of spiritual intervention in the affairs of men, handed down through history and myth.

But with all the development of modern civilization, there is much wanting before man can receive the teachings of the inspiration now waiting to lead him up to the height of his great calling. Foremost among the causes which retard his progress and higher attainment is declared to be ignorance and disobedience of divine law in the marriage relation, to the true culture of which we would again allude as lying at the foundation of social science.

More and more the beautiful outworking or the terrible power of heredity are recognized among the most potent causes of man's weal or woe. There is a call yet more to recognize the power for good or evil in the birthright of every human being, which comes not of ancestral origin only, but is the direct result of true or false conditions in each particular parentage. Out of the heart are the issues of life; and most assuredly out of the marriage relation, before aught else, spring the tendencies which determine the starting-point of every new-born life. This familiar thought demands such consideration now as it has never yet received, for the establishment of a

basis in the coming development. There must be cultivated first a truer and more general desire for knowledge in this momentous regard. By degrees the wrongs may become more apparent of themselves, and be slowly eradicated through independent action of each sincere mind and willing heart. But conditions so established through ignorance and the predominance of selfish life on the natural plane, so long rooted in the broad field of humanity, must need be, in a measure, forcibly ejected, before they can be planted out by the better life, under the knowledge brought through suffering; and the sooner the work of removal is begun, the speedier will be the coming of the long-desired kingdom. Man's freedom to break the divine law indicated in purpose has given him opportunity to know, through experience, the bitter fruits of disobedience. Let him cease now to make that freedom his poor excuse, and turn it rather into noble opportunity for willing obedience, by which alone he can become master of his lower nature, and in the highest sense a law unto himself, through perfect accord with the Good Father's will and purpose. As never before, angel messengers are pressing this momentous subject upon the minds of the men and women of to-day. Like the voice of God again sounding through the Garden, is the call summoning man to answer if he has been true in this most sacred relation. Shall shame, through past disobedience, still force him to

hide from the Great Presence? Let him, rather, penitently study the broken injunction, and, with the wisdom gathered out of suffering, humbly re-enter at the once flaming gates,—through his obedience no longer a barrier,—and seek to attain that felicity, handed down among all peoples and from all time since he became a sojourner upon earth, as his true birthright. Paradise gained or regained, it matters not, if only its blessed possibility be reached!

It is interesting to observe how, through predominance of the natural or selfish love, comes the sense of possession, which actuates all mating among the lower animals, and shows itself in man through the passion of jealousy. This is plainly for the protection and welfare of animal life on the natural plane; but for man is needed only so long as his life is ordered on that plane. When human life is raised to its spiritual standard, so that men and women, through subjection of the natural to the spiritual love, can rule themselves, the need of this selfish element, this sense of possession in love, disappears. The marriage relation, entered into with consentient attraction and impulse on both the natural and spiritual planes,—which increase in power with true use and wise experience,—becomes a durable bond that needs no such jealous protection. The selfish sense of possession gives place to a proper sense of belonging that leaves no opportunity for doubt, and would afford no encour-

agement to selfish approaches from without. Love between men and women, thus held in the service of God, is free for other and wide expression, not limited to the mated relation, which will help to keep that relation fresh and strong in its own proper bounds, instead of being dragged out in selfish confinement — leading to indifference, if not repulsion, as it too often now is. The sacred injunction, *Love one another*, no longer restrained by fear of selfish misrule, would be followed in all the social relations with such beautiful adaptations and healthful results, on both the natural and spiritual planes, as has been possible only in exceptional instances during these eighteen hundred years of slow development of the Christ ideal. In such way has the true gospel of Modern Spiritualism come to fulfil, not to destroy. That this individual ruling of the life, through supremacy of the spiritual love, has no conflict with human law is readily seen. When the marriage relation is thus conducted the statutes regulating it will be no impediment, and the laws of divorce will happily become dead-letter laws ; as those against theft and murder are dead letters to all whose lives are up to the Christian standard of love to God and man.

The evil to be overcome, being deep-seated, demands radical treatment. The work of prevention must begin with the young. Children must be educated to accept natural things naturally, and ever

with the pure spirit to which all things are pure. The ideas of false shame, now so generally inculcated, must give place to a desire for holiness before God and man. Let them be taught to look upon clothes no longer as the covering of nakedness and shame, but rather as climatic necessities, and protection from injury and unwholesome approaches, — while still calling for proper interest in appearance, to make that pleasant as may be to others. Indifference to the decencies of life is not involved in such idea of dress. Taught that the body is but the clothing of the spirit, let children learn to cherish it with religious desire for its best development and the highest and best use of its powers ; and in turn to care for the clothing of the body, with the desire foremost to accommodate it to its chief uses. Before God, and in the eye of the pure spirit, there is no such condition as nakedness, in the low sense suggested in false shame, resulting from false education and false living.

By the removal of false shame through right education, so that all natural relations shall be looked upon with the purity of mind that knows not shame, and with the subjection of the natural to the spiritual love through proper culture of both, most momentous ends will be accomplished. Evils which are now the despair of the wisest philanthropy will find their only effective prevention, and coming generations will everywhere rise up to call their parents blessed.

Among the obstacles to attaining the new life, spirit messengers allude often to errors in food. This leads to the general subject of appetite. Given to the animal kingdom for the purpose, of keeping up the life of the body, and continuing the races to their appointed uses and ends, the appetites of the flesh have ascended to man, through his relation to that kingdom, and in the state to which they had been developed prior to his life upon earth. In these appetites, as in other respects, the comparative anatomy of body and spirit, through the animal races, leads up to man. Among the brute animals, to whom is given no power from generation to generation of improving their natural states, — though all the while they have been elaborating the elements of earth through their several organisms, each after their kind, — the appetites are restrained by fixed conditions. But for man, called to a higher destiny, these natural restraints are removed, his range for possible indulgence of appetite being almost without limit. Uniting in his organism, physically and spiritually, all the elements of earth-life, man, the microcosm, is gifted with power, and therewith called to subdue these elements, and in his turn to raise them in their various forms to their highest development. As he finds himself opposed by the forces of nature in subduing the surface of the earth, whence has come, through difficulty and struggle, much of his present

external progress, so in his corresponding labor to subdue, develop, and elevate the creature elements,—handed up to him through the whole animal kingdom, to be perfected in his body and spirit,—he must meet and overcome difficulty and opposition before he can attain “the prize of his high calling.” Thus in man’s own being, at last, would seem to be centred the “conflict of the ages,” begun in the war of elements, when form first sprang out of chaos, and to be ended only when his destiny is fulfilled. Having divine uses, the appetites of the flesh—in their natural condition, and legitimate development through the animal kingdom—are good, though selfish. In man they are good, and in their action crowned with a proper joy, so long as they are held by the divine principle within him to true uses and ends. But when perverted from their true uses and allowed unrestrained indulgence,—made possible through the free agency, without which he would not be in the image of God,—these appetites fall into states of hell, and carry with them the victims of their power.

Much, then, must depend upon the right selection of food, as well as upon its temperate use. That the human race will in the coming time find all its food in the grains, fruits, and herbs, is not questioned. Many facts of to-day point to this end. It is true that the fibrin of animal flesh is found chemically to be the gluten of the grains; but the gluten is raised one

step in the progress of being by passing into the animal life, and so attains a quickening, heating, febrile power in flesh meat, which tends to over-stimulate and corrupt man's true health, however much habit and his present average development seem to demand, and perhaps for a time longer really do need it. Again, argument has been drawn in favor of animal food from the constitution of man's body, and especially from his teeth. It is claimed that his canine teeth indicate capacity for, and so need of, animal food; but here, again, *ultimate purpose*, on which rests the law of the new life, is shown in the canine being more than matched by the other teeth and the whole *set together upon an even line*, requiring a *harmonious* use for them all. Can this use be fulfilled by eating meat? The grains and the fruits, in their natural states and as prepared by man, call into exercise all the teeth, including the canine, but they do not tend to encourage and keep in its natural qualities the canine element, as the feeding on flesh meat, the natural canine food, must. Taken as it is, the canine race can hardly live without its natural food, as indicated by its teeth; but the canine element, as it exists in man, can be sufficiently fed without flesh meat. It is in man — as including all creature elements below him — that the possibilities of the lion eating grass, and the wolf lying down with the lamb, may be fulfilled; while the original creatures themselves must disappear

from the face of the earth, their work accomplished. "Paradise Regained" will be satisfied with that primitive provision, whatever its source, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat; and to every beast of the earth and to every fowl of the air and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat."¹ Already a suggestion of the coming time in this regard may be found in the difference of feeling with which refining humanity can pluck an ear of corn and thank God for it, while it would shrink with abhorrence from plunging the knife into the living creature, whose flesh it still craves and for a while may yet require.

A more interesting topic perhaps to the general reader, and one of importance to those who have known nothing of Spiritualism other than little-credited reports of its phenomena, is the source of consolation, real and available to all, opened through its simplest manifestations. The aspect of death is so changed through their acceptance, so robbed of its terror, made so beautiful in the absolute assurance of the new birth,—not into a Plutonic kingdom of night, nor into a far-off region of light whence no message of love can return, but into a nearer

¹ Genesis i. 29, 30.

realm of spirit-life, to which the avenues of approach and communication are no longer closed. The consolations of religious trust are much and many; but they cannot fill the void in the aching heart as can one word — nay, one tiny rap — that assures of the near presence of the loved and seemingly lost. Not that any form of spirit manifestation can wholly fill up the void caused by death, or fully replace the magnetisms of the bodily presence, the living elements of physical life which are removed when the spirit puts off its earthly habiliment; but to the cry so often going out, “Give me one word, one touch, one look” from the dear departed child, parent, brother, friend, Spiritualism does offer a consoling response such as can come in no other way; and it is as legitimate to find this comfort from the sources now opened as it is to avail of any of the alleviations of human suffering which the development of knowledge has brought, or — with the good Father’s blessing and help — will yet be discovered for the ills of earth, ere they are removed through the better conditions now at hand and promised.

In closing we would once more touch upon the subject of Individuality, that there may be no misapprehension of what has been written of the continued influence exercised over human lives by the spirit-spheres. Real as that influence is, yet there is no escape from the responsibility of every child of earth

to see to it that his life is well ordered out of the purpose of his own will and thought. Led, as he may be unawares, to lines of conduct not of his original seeking, the responsibility is to hold his purpose of well-doing without swerving, and leave the shaping of his life in such measure to circumstances and the unseen influences, in connection with his own desire and purpose, as may be allotted to him.

“There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will,”

and these unseen influences have much to do in the shaping; but never should man or woman let the reins slip from their hands so far as to lose the power of determining between right and wrong, under the best culture of conscience which they can attain, and of restraining every prompting and impulse that is not in accord with their highest sense of right. To be passive and receptive to all that is good, but positive and repellant to all that is wrong, is the plain and safe rule of conduct. Spiritualism shows that the advantage of such self-direction and control goes out and beyond to others, in ways and to an extent little dreamed of by those unacquainted with these modern proofs of spirit presence. Indeed, none of us can know fully the power of our lives to help the benighted on those other shores, — who are waiting to be led out of blind conditions, consequent upon their own life-ex-

periences, — by the influence of our conduct and lives, which is ever operating in turn to help or to hinder the “cloud of witnesses” about us. “Spirits in prison” there are on that other side, waiting for the resurrection of our spirits — yet in earth-life — from low desires and external seekings, which are holding us and them in continuing bondage to things of sense, when they and we should be free in the service of the Good Father. The power of example and influence is recognized in earth-life, and is momentous for that alone; but how much more momentous when this wider area of possible influence is contemplated! Surely, if other motive were wanting, here is inducement enough to raise the dying and the dead in spirit out of their low conditions, their living sepulchres, to the new life in the NEW ERA now opening.

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